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THE

NATURAL SON.

A TRAGEDY.

Liverpool,

PRINTED BY J. M'CREERY, HOUGHTON-STREET;

FOR T. CADELL, JUN. AND W. DAVIES, STRAND, LONDON.

1805.

BODLEIAN
25 JUL 1931
LIBRARY

TO MRS. TRENCH.

THE following Play, in which I have endeavoured to engage the attention of the reader, by the exhibition of the domestic feelings, you must allow me to dedicate to you. Gallantry might have pointed out a more distant object than a sister, but it is the best purpose of a dedication to offer a testimony of esteem and affection, nor is there any one to whom these sentiments so immediately direct me as to you, who have sanctioned and confirmed them by the experience of my whole life.

JAMES MASON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARQUIS DE EBOLI.

DON FERDINAND.

LORD EDWARD.

DESMOND.

PROVOST.

TWO MONKS.

MARCHIONESS DE EBOLI.

JULIA.

The Scene lies in Madrid.

THE NATURAL SON.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment of* LORD EDWARD'S.

MARQUIS DE EBOLI—LORD EDWARD.

Marquis.

OH! tis a plea beyond cold reason's power,
The feeling heart's resistless eloquence,
Enforc'd by gratitude and sacred justice:
Then hear me—

L. Edw. First hear me—When to Madrid
Unknown I came, you as a friend received me;
In mem'ry of my father, whom in youth
You knew, his son you warmly welcom'd
With all the glow of hospitality.
Beneath your roof I found a splendid home,
And mid the num'rous visitors that wait

Your call, distinction fell on me—your daughter!
Could I be dull when all around admir'd;
Made to be lov'd, she fix'd my proudest hopes;
When I presum'd to tell my venturous passion,
She deign'd to listen with complacency.

Mar. And trust me, sir, with heartfelt grief I mourn
The sad necessity, that rudely mocks
This splendid vision.

L. Edw. Then forbear—forbear:
Let me indulge in dreams of heav'nly bliss,
Nor yet awake to misery.

Mar. To prevent
Too rude a shock, where e'en a breath may wound,
Where all is strung to agony or rapture,
I wish to speak; then listen, I entreat you.

L. Edw. My lord, proceed.

Mar. And, first, believe me,
E'en to a father's eye your situation
Presents no fault; and for your character,
So firm it rests on my esteem and love,
That were the fickle goddess less indulgent,
Your mind had brought an ample recompense.
Your country is my idol—I foresaw
My blood transmitted in a land of freedom.
You may suppose, that, thinking thus,
And fondly tracing, in your noble nature,
My early friend, with warm delight I hail'd

Your

Your strong attachment to my child, my Julia.
Her mother thought as I did.

L. Edw. So I hop'd.

Mar. Gaily imagination deck'd the scene.
Our only child, of all our hopes and fears
Long the lov'd object, blest with your affection,
In the attachment of a virtuous man,
Had found a pledge of lasting happiness.
So fancy weaved—with colours dipt in heav'n.

L. Edw. What daring hand hath rent the glitt'ring web?
On my fair name has pois'nous slander breath'd!
Bring forth the vile accuser front to front.
Would disappointed love its pain avenge
In mine; tis yours to pity, not believe.
Would hatred its malignant rancour feed
With my destruction, spurn its black invective.

Mar. Oh no!—beyond the pow'r, far, far, you stand
Of slander's aim, of disappointed love,
Of ranc'rous hate—there is another cause.

L. Edw. For heaven's sake declare it—I am lost
In dark uncertainty.

Mar. The marchioness—

L. Edw. Yes, sir.

Mar. You have perceived her deep dejection.

L. Edw. I mourn the sad remembrance as yourself.

Mar.

Mar. Supremely blest with all that heav'n can give,
She only proves the world's sad vanity.
With studious eye she reads th' historic page,
Or with the poet trembles o'er the verse.
Great nature's charms attract her wond'ring eye,
And with their various witchery can soothe
Or elevate her soul: form'd for the world,
She moves along unrivall'd there,
The loveliest star in fashion's galaxy;
Yet still the canker-worm of sorrow gnaws
Her life away.

L. Edw. And know you not the cause?

Mar. There's—there's the curse of all—the crying evil—
In silent secrecy she mourns the past,
And melancholy, fed in solitude,
Adds to the weight, too heavy now to bear.
Whate'er the source, a deep'ning gloom pervades
Her life's proud noon—of late convulsive starts
Shoot thro' her frame, and form a sad variety.
Poor Julia mourns her mother's banish'd peace,
Yet still affecting gaiety before her;
Oft-times she steals, where all unknown, unseen,
She drowns herself with tears.

L. Edw. Julia in tears?

Mar. In marrying you, my daughter will forsake

Her

Her native land, and fix her home in England.
Should Julia leave her poor despairing mother,
What eye shall fill with quick responsive woe?
What voice shall pour affection's soft'ning tones,
Or, sweetly moral, speak of joys to come?
No weak caprice guides Julia's firm resolve.

L. Edw. Did she, did Julia speak of separation?
Could she pronounce the words farewell for ever?

Mar. The marchioness dissents, and still rejects
The sacrifice.

L. Edw. Oh! all excelling woman!
On her tranquillity my hopes shall rest;
My country should I leave, and to the land
That gave me birth, become a foreigner,
Supporting Julia in her great employ,
Objections then must vanish into air.

Mar. 'Twould be repaying ill the debt I owe
My old friend's kindness, meanly to seduce
From the high hopes, that lead to glorious fame,
His only son, and check the great career
That fancy paints before the father's eye,
Where, as the soldier, scholar, senator,
With kindling heat you fire the martial band,
Or dwell with rapture on the classic page,
Or for your country, greatly eloquent,
Pour out your soul in sacred freedom's cause.

Yourself

Yourself (I err not) still ambition sways,
And love but waves a stolen sceptre o'er you.

L. Edw. Ambition's most attractive charms are fled,
Fled with the wish of proving to the world
Your daughter's choice was not entirely worthless.

Mar. To leave untried no effort for your union,
I once suggested to the marchioness
A residence in England.

L. Edw. She refused?

Mar. Refus'd! shudd'ring refus'd—refus'd with horror.
Her quick convulsive agony declared
Some dreadful bond mysterious, that connects
Your country with her deeply settled woe.

L. Edw. Must all the golden days I've spent beneath
Your happy roof, bless'd by my Julia's smiles,
Pass like a vision of the night away?

Mar. How I lament the sad necessity!

L. Edw. Oh! with what language shall I next address her?

Mar. Speak as to one, who frankly own'd her love,
And left her father, friends, all, all, for you,
But a despairing mother.

L. Edw. Yes, be it so,

My

My Julia shall console her mother's grief:
For such an office gracious heaven made her.
Pain cannot last for ever—future days!

Mar. Trust not the forms futurity describes;
As in the watery current, images,
That every passing breeze disjoints, inverts,
They cheat the gaze, till even fancy sickens,
So oft pursuing, and so oft deluded.

Enter DESMOND.

Des. Lord Edward!

L. Edw. Desmond!

Des. Oh! how fortunate!
Thus in the presence of my dearest friend,
To be reliev'd from cheerless solitude,
Or worse than solitude, in crowds unknown;
Now fourteen days of gloom shall be redeem'd.
I little thought to find you in Madrid;
Good truth, you travel leisurely.

L. Ed. (Absently) This is
The Marquis de Eboli.

Des. Who! who! said you?

L. Edw. My lord, one of my earliest friends,
Desmond,
Of whom you have heard me speak.

Des. What now, Edward? look, look upon
me, pray;

Have

Have *you* forgotten me?

L. Edw. Forgotten you?
Oh! pardon me—my thoughts are not my own:
Tis I most need a friend—come—shall we walk?

Des. Most willingly.

L. Edw. And you, my lord?

Mar. I'm ready to attend you. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the House of the Marquis de Eboli.*

The MARCHIONESS DE EBOLI *and* JULIA.

March. My dearest Julia! have you thus resign'd,
The fondest hope that flush'd your youthful cheek,
And on the mist of years pourtray'd, how brightly!
The rainbow forms of happiness and love?

Julia. Do you but smile, and all my life to come
Shall bloom with brighter joys than e'er it knew.
'Tis your affliction tears my anxious breast.

March. For you, my daughter, I'll be ever cheerful.

Julia. And really happy?

March. Oh! forbear, sweet girl,

The

The sternest foe to peace must fly from you.

Julia. What loss then can I feel? here will I live,
And vainly talk of endless gratitude,
Of obligations I can ne'er repay—my father!

Enter the MARQUIS DE EBOLI.

March. Your charge was useless, I presume, my lord.

Mar. As I expected—Edward's manly sense
The weak romance of little minds disowns,
And feels the justice of a mother's claim.
Yet slow his spirit lingers o'er the past,
And then he wildly talks of an hereafter
I fear will ne'er arrive.

Julia. I'll say, farewell!
And you, my mother, who so well have known him,
Will oft expatiate on his excellence,
When he is far from us. *Exit.*

March. Alas! she weeps!
I am grown fond of grief, and hoard it now.
With avarice—I can spare none to Julia.
I know him well—and from a certainty,
This scheme, my lord, cannot succeed, I grant
A short suspension of my daughter's bliss,
Which, were it lasting, would increase my woes,
And

And agonize my tortur'd brain to madness.
Enough of this—you pass'd the public square,
Were the inhabitants assembled there?

Mar. Spectators crowded every avenue.

March. Oh! wretched people! to supply such scenes!

And still more wretched to rejoice in them!

Mar. My dearest love! above the crowd enthron'd,
With reason to enforce fair mercy's rule,
The superstitious horrors you detest,*
That desolate our land—the tortur'd wretch,
Who sinks in death beneath the raging flame,
Shall breathe out thanks to you, who solac'd him,
When all forsook him, in imprisonment,
And his last sigh shall speed a prayer for you.

March.

---

* The following account of an *auto da fé*, is taken from *A Journey through Spain, by the Marquis de Langle.*

"It is in the Dominican church that the trial and sentence are read. "At the conclusion of a sermon, the criminal is dragged to the principal "square, or market place, to hear mass, receive the sacrament, and be "burnt. For this purpose a scaffold and an altar are erected, and a fune- "ral pile is prepared. The words, *ite, missa, est*, serve as a signal for "throwing the devoted wretch into the flames. The funeral pile, the altar, "the populace, and the victim, are sprinkled with holy water, and the "*miserere* is sung. The executioner scatters the ashes, the holy office re- "turn home singing; and twenty thousand human beings have been spec- "tators of this abominable ceremony."

March. Ye guiltless victims of unholy rage!
E'en now the fatal fire innoxious plays,
And the loud bigot laugh is heard no more;
But the poor widow and her helpless orphan,
Still live to mourn their only guardian lost.

Mar. Yet a protector they have found.

March. In whom?

Mar. A youth I left but now, Lord Edward's friend.
I never saw—

March. From England?

Mar. Yes, from England.
He bears the mark of sorrow, deep impress'd
On every feature, yet, as he pass'd the crowd,
His ardent temper, darting uncontrol'd,
In quick transition, now th' oppressor hating,
And now in pity melting for the suff'rers,
Bespoke a heart of varied excellence.

March. How long has he been in Madrid?

Mar. Some fourteen days.

March. In stature?

Mar. The usual height perhaps, or more.

March. His complexion dark?

Mar. Why—why this agitation?

March. Dark, said you?

Mar. If I remember right.

March. And his name?

Mar. Desmond.

March.

March. Oh heavens! I've heard before
Of him—we will assist his noble wish,
To comfort these poor mourners.

Mar. What is this?

March. My lord!

Mar. Alas! Amelia—oh! I weep to think
Of this your glorious life, how tis adorn'd
With actions of angelic excellence,
Till parents teach their babes to lisp your name,
And offer all their prayers for a resemblance.

March. Am I indeed so honor'd by the world?

Mar. Envy itself is dead; yet thus array'd
In all that fame and nature can bestow,
Your languid head you droop in silent sorrow,
And when of mirthful wit th' electric laugh
Speeds thro' the radiant circle, you partake not;
Alone you stand, all cold, abstracted, lost,
And the forc'd smile plays vainly on your lips.

March. Spare me! oh spare!

Mar. The secret cause reveal
Of this your deep affliction, and each hope,
Each wish, each serious thought, shall dwell
On means,

March. My lord, be faithful to your word;
When to your importunities I yielded,
And gave you, all I had to give, my hand,
Did I deceive you with a shew of joy?
I spoke of secret woes: you granted me

The privilege of solitary grief;
Tis not to harass you with mystery
I claim your promise still. Then, oh! forgive
My too rude melancholy, that forgets
The forms of company.

Mar. Believe me, love!
'Twas not the eye of curiosity,
That search'd the wounds of such a soul as yours,
Communicated woe is half relieved.

March. Look thro' the world: you'll find your maxim true,
My griefs must be my own—and now, my lord,
Permit me in return to question you:
Have I disgrac'd Alvarez' sacred name?
Has the bright stream, that flows from kings and princes,
Been interrupted here, or found a stain?
Have I admitted to your house the worthless,
Though resting boldly on the world's applause?
In the calm progress of domestic life
Have you in thought accus'd me of remissness?
Have I not studied to promote your plans?
And e'en your secret hopes anticipate?
Rais'd on esteem our early union grew,
And mutual confidence entwin'd a wreath
Of flowers, less gay than love's, but still unfading.

Mar. Trust me, my love, that wreath shall bloom for ever.

Oh!

Oh! when I think of all the countless blessings
Your hand hath shower'd in rich profusion here,
How from illib'ral prejudice you rais'd
My wav'ring mind, and by your bright example,
Taught me as man to feel for fellow-man,

March. Oh! surely then, my lord, to shed a tear
O'er scenes my busy mem'ry still recalls,
Sometimes to weep, and beg to weep uncheck'd,
This is a favour you will kindly grant;
I would not boast, and I intreat your pardon.

Mar. Deep in my heart I'll learn from you to hide
My keen anxiety.

March. Ah! did you know
How hard it is to suffer still in secret,
No sympathizing voice to speak of peace,
Mere worldly compliments you would not need
To prove my thanks—no, no, it must not be.

Mar. Oh! were this breast insensible and cold,
Or fir'd by jealousy's destructive rage,
That raised imploring eye had taught it mercy,
And charm'd suspicion's self to soft repose.

Exit.

March. Then all my fears are just: tis fourteen days
Since from my window I beheld him first,
As to and fro, with interrupted step,

He

He pac'd before my gate—I knew him well;
The eye of fire, that with majestic glance
Thro' mighty nature pierc'd, the graceful form,
Where strength was softened into elegance!
(Oh seeming excellence! how little worth!)
Were all his father—I forgot my wrongs,
In this their much lov'd consequence.
Vain idle thought! disgrace pursues that step!
Alvarez' name would close in infamy;
Hence! horrid shade of dying glory, hence!
I gaz'd, tis true, till vision seem'd to fail,
And, as I left the place, whence my fond eyes
Were rivetted, my slow and lingering steps
Bespoke, how well I could have lov'd him—
lov'd him!
And taught him to pursue the path of honour,
And warn'd him where the gulph of passion gap'd,
And pray'd him to forgive the cold neglect
That visited his infancy—no—no—
A daughter! husband! twenty years of fame!
Forbid! and a fond mother's love were crime.

Exit.

Enter LORD EDWARD.

L. Edw. I should have borne my brilliant
hopes delay'd
More firmly far—oh! when I think of all

This noble, matchless woman suffers, my woes
Are like a passing cloud.

Enter JULIA.

My dearest Julia!

Jul. Alas! alas! e'en as I entered now
I met my mother—oh! had you seen her,
Then, then you'd weep like me.

L. Edw. Tis most dreadful.

Jul. A livid paleness veil'd her face—her breast
Heav'd with convulsive throbs—while streams of tears
Which she would wipe away reproachfully,
Flow'd down her cheek.

L. Edw. What horrid conflict's this?

Julia. Can I forsake her?

L. Edw. No—my lovely Julia,
Where shall she refuge find, if not with you?
But oh! believe me, the Almighty Being,
By whom unnotic'd, not a sparrow falls,
Who listens to the hungry raven's cry,
Shall in his mercy interpose his arm,
To save the noblest of his mortal works
From premature decay—then, then, my love—

Jul. Oh! how shall I implicitly confide?

My

My father ever talks of new impressions,
And chides the thought of your remembring still
Your friends in Spain.

L. Edw. He speaks with prudent care,
And, as an anxious father, cautions gives,
That in reality he deems superfluous.
How proudly shall I introduce to all
My beauteous foreigner; yes, yes, my love!
This dim obscurity shall pass away,
And the same sun that once our days illum'd,
Shall brighten those to come.

Julia. But th' interval!
Should it be long, and you be call'd away?

L. Edw. Each thought, not rais'd devotedly to you,
Will strike a second pang of separation.

Julia. Yet, yet, should you forget me, Julia's sighs
Amid the boisterous waves will sink unheard.

L. Edw. I'm told there is a pow'r in sympathy,
Nor time nor space can weaken or impede,
That bears the sigh across the stormy deep,
Or lengthens out the sorrowing last farewell,
Though caves and rocks and deserts intervene,
Or to our nightly visions still suggests
The forms we lov'd, e'en as we lov'd them most.

Julia. I shall forget my beads, I fear, to kneel

A truer vot'ry there—now let me haste
To seek my mother—countless are her woes.

L. Edw. All the good angels, as they must, protect you.

End of the First Act.

ACT. II.

SCENE I.—*A public Walk.*

LORD EDWARD *and* DESMOND.

Lord Edward.

MY accidental coldness thus explain'd!
You'll pardon me—it came not from the heart.
Des. Or rather say, it did come from the heart.
Thrice happy Edward! I congratulate you;
But I—I, loveless, joyless, desolate!
L. Edw. What! melancholy? you, whose nimble blood
Cours'd through your veins with such rapidity,
Chasing the misty humours that oppress
More tardy spirits; but say, what brought you here?
A warm description of some beauteous nun,
Some sainted Ursula? your travellers
Delight in painting these secluded fair,

As

As far beyond the charms exposed so rudely,
To the cold bleaching of our northern sky.

Des. I cannot jest, and in your friendship, Edward,
I'd treasure up the cares that weigh me down.

L. Edw. Is it so true a sorrow? you, whose fire
Shone ever bright, with zeal unchang'd,
Eager to undertake whate'er employ,
Or opportunity or chance presented.

Des. Now I'm inactive, fly the social board,
Unable to amuse, or be amus'd,
And the quick flame, that blaz'd so vivid here,
Glimmers but faintly, half extinguish'd, chill'd.

L. Edw. Oh! what a world is this! the great, the good,
Born but to mark the common lot of man!
Through many happy hours I've shar'd your joys,
But feel it now a higher priveledge
To bear the burden of your sorrows with you.

Des. The venerable man, you well remember
I once suppos'd my father.

L. Edw. You suppos'd?

Des. A month ago he pay'd the long ow'd debt
Of nature.

L. Edw. Old, infirm, with slow decay,
Silent, he sunk in death.

Des. For nineteen years

I've call'd him father, and discover now
The lov'd deceit he practis'd on my feelings,
His kindness only justified that name.
L. Edw. Indeed!
Des. Related by the gen'ral bond
Of man with man, no more.
L. Edw. Tis strange;
Yet now the past crowds busy on my mind.
His treatment of you, his extreme indulgence,
Mix'd with no anxious trembling for your faults,
The lib'ral wealth outrunning all your wants.
With no instructions on its use or waste,
When of your mother you would fondly talk,
His deep confusion, and unwillingness
To answer to your interrogatories,
All, all, to an unclouded eye declar'd
A myst'ry in your birth and parentage.
Des. The sad intelligence pursued me far
Of my friend's death—so I must call him now:
Edward, I lov'd him, as alone on earth
Connected with me by the ties of blood,
And a long chain of sweet remembrances
Were snapt asunder—hast'ning to behold
The last respect paid to his honor'd shade,
With tears of gratitude and filial love
I dew'd his grave—Imagine my surprise,
When midst his num'rous papers I perceiv'd
That all the ample means of consequence,

I had

I had enjoy'd in my superfluous wealth,
With great provision for futurity,
Had flow'd from Spain.

L. Edw. What do I hear?

Des. My search became more anxious, when I found
A scroll peculiarly address'd to me;
This, Edward, this disclos'd the awful secret,
That on the balance of the hour decides
For me unutterable joy or woe;
Tis there, I am confess'd the natural son
Of Amelia d' Alvarez—

L. Edw. Almighty powers!

Des. The sole descendant from a noble line,
And that my mother—

L. Edw. This then is the myst'ry,
The fearful myst'ry, wildly agonizing—
And know you of your father?

Des. Nothing—nothing:
My aged friend, tis easy to perceive,
Was but an instrument in other hands,
And ignorant of ev'ry circumstance
His great employers could conceal from him.
But what said you? is not my mother happy?

L. Edw. Happy? the meanest beggar of the street,
Whose haggard eye proclaims the tale of famine,
Whose tortures tell him what his children feel,

Is

Is happier than your mother.

Des. Alas for pity!

L. Edw. And you the source of all her fears, her woes!

Desmond, my friend, I pray you listen to me:
Let me implore you for my Julia's sake;
O'er every step you take maturely pause.

Des. You surely err—I never was ambitious;
Before the public eye to move confess'd,
And honor'd as her son, my wishes soar not.

L. Edw. Then spoke my best, my earliest, dearest friend;
Forgive, forgive the momentary wrong,
Of my unjust suspicion.

Des. Hid from the world,
In silent privacy, oh! should she smile
With the fond ardour of a mother's love,
The secret hour shall sanctify my joy.

L. Edw. Then may her future days unclouded pass,
Secure of fame, supported by her son.

Des. The writer thus concludes his history:
My mother wishing to conceal my birth,
In cradled infancy entrusted me
To him whose honor'd name I still must bear,
Enjoining him to bury in oblivion
My high descent—that being an Englishman,
He chose his country for our residence,

Where

Where he would humbly hope he treated me
In education, or my general life,
As well became the race of great Alvarez.

L. Ed. You have not seen the Marchioness?

Des. Oh no!
From day to day I've pac'd before her gate,
Hoping, and still not daring to explore,
If hope was but illusive—rack'd with suspense,
Till madd'ning torture forc'd the bold attempt,
And then my smother'd voice refusing still
To announce the stranger's presence—yet why doubt?
She cannot, cannot, spurn me from her love;
The voice of nature pleads, and must be heard.
Yes, yes, I'll go to her, alone, without you;
I would not raise a blush upon her cheek,
Though none but warm admiring friends beheld her.

(Voices are heard chanting)

Enter a number of Children, who pass over the stage two by two chanting.

L. Edw. (To a Priest who follows) Some festival, good sir?

Priest. The birth-day of the bounteous dame,
Our noble foundress, and these grateful orphans
Kneel in yon church before the sacred altar,
Invoking

Invoking for her long and happy days.

L. Edw. May I presume to ask her name?

Priest. Her name?

It is a name ennobl'd not by blood
Alone, but more, far more, by virtuous deeds,
That throw the purple current back to gain
E'en at its source a fresher, brighter hue.
You'll recognize the name of D' Eboli;
But I must leave you.

Des. Oh! may I act, not to disgrace her son.
This, I imagine, is her lovely form,
Where art has linger'd with its finest touches;
I found it with the hist'ry of my birth.

(Giving a miniature)

L. Edw. Had I not seen the bright original,
Still had I boldly prais'd the strong resemblance;
Tis not for art, nor in the scope of genius,
To feign a face like this—oh tis herself!
Her foften'd sentiment, her noble pride!
Far dearer now, the mother of my friend.

Des. Heaven grant it! *Exeunt.*

The Children returning chant the following verses.

Spirit! of universal love!
Protect the orphan's friend;
Thy balmy pinions round her move,
The whisper'd wish attend.

May

May all her thoughts successive fly,
Soft as the dreams of heav'n;
As downy slumbers close her eye,
Oh may those dreams be given.

In "silent, unperceiv'd decay,"
May age steal slowly on;
Till, as the mortal falls away,
The soul assumes its throne.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—MARCHIONESS *reading.*

(Throwing aside her book.)

March. Away, ye gilded trifles! pompous nothings;
The pedant's dogma, or the poet's dream,
The heart disowns you; tis to you I turn,
Children of wretchedness! can you accuse me?
Have I pursued your piercing cries with scorn?
Oh! not the poorest, most oppress'd amongst you,
Pillow'd on straw, his pittance ill supply'd,
But I may envy—he has his children round him.
But what if I confess his high descent,
And to the world proclaim him as my son?
How the chaste prude, who no distinction knows,

But

But all, who fall, blends in one common shame,
How will she triumph! how the men will sneer
At the once proud Amelia!—my daughter too!
Will feel th' involuntary blush, and shrink
As the rude jest assails my hapless fate!
E'en the poor object of my charity,
Will deem the tale but fortune's privilege,
And thank his God his wife is my superior:
All, all will scorn and trample on my name,
The world will scoff at great Alvarez' daughter!
Spirit of my father! save me! break, ye strings
That twine around my heart, it shall be so:
My honor'd name shall live unstain'd for ever!

Enter PAGE.

Page. An English gentleman, my lady.

March. An English gentleman! why smile you, boy?

Page. Madam, I did not smile.

March. Introduce him. *(Takes up her book and reads.)*

Enter DESMOND.

Des. Each lineament exact, yet grief has worn
Its furrows there—I interrupt you, madam.

March. Oh! tis himself—his voice—support me, heaven!

Your

Your pardon, sir.

Des. How, how shall I address her?
She awes me into silent reverence.

March. You are a stranger in Madrid, I fancy.

Des. I am unhappily a stranger here.

March. What! melancholy, sir! can sorrow
live
Where mirth and pleasure riot madly round;
Where rapture's tones awake the lively dance,
And radiant beauty threads the dazzling maze,
Where from all nations num'rous travellers
Meet to amuse, enliven, and inform;
Where for sequestered men the lab'ring student
Wastes the long night in proud philosophy.
Can grief pursue this ever-varying line?

Des. Can gauds like these relieve the rooted
care
That preys upon the heart?

March. You've answer'd me.

Des. I love the world: around the festive
board
I've caught the laugh, the gayest of the gay,
But tis a pleasure quickly vanishing;
By crowds surrounded, man exalts his step,
Eager to gain the tribute of applause,
The glitt'ring pageant, gaz'd at, and forgot,
Affection stamps his image on the heart,
And with the heart alone the impression dies.

March.

March. Oh! fly their fate, who build their happiness
On visionary thoughts, and baseless hopes;
The fond embrace thrills thro' the cradl'd babe,
And soft endearments wake the smile of love;
Man proudly scorns the weakness of the child,
Old age approaches with his sweeping scythe,
And cuts the last remains of feeling down;
The close of life is cold and desolate,
Nor love nor friendship glimmer round the grave.

Des. Oh! tinge your picture with a warmer hue;
The blest affections have not fled the earth,
Though seldom found, and at long intervals.

March. World! world! what do I sacrifice to thee! *(aside)*

Des. There are, there are, who deem affection's ties,
And all the soften'd charities of home,
Choicest of heaven's gifts, that make earth heav'n.
No dread alarms, no lengthen'd toil severe,
Tho' life itself hung trembling on the hazard,
Could for a moment check their fond attempt,
To catch the sigh of sympathy and love.

March. I would believe all this—but why to me?

Des. Oh! search your heart, and find an answer there.

March.

March. You are mysterious! were you more explicit,
Your purpose (now impenetrably veil'd)
Would be effected far more speedily.
Des. Oh! am I quite unknown?
March. My memory
Presents no traces of your form or manner.
Des. Then hear me, kneeling thus, thus low, submissive,
To tell you all my boast, and all my hope.
March. Rise, sir, I am not us'd to suits so fervent.
Des. I've travell'd far, tost between hope and fear,
My nights unknown to sleep, my days to peace.
March. Insulted by a stranger!
Des. Stranger? mother!
March. What do I hear? sir, surely, if you jest,
A better subject you might find than feelings
But now the topic of your eulogy;
If with my ranc'rous enemies you've join'd,
For the destruction of my peace and fame,
Learn, sir, the daughter of Alvarez knows
To feel the wrong, and to chastise th' offender.
Des. Oh! can a son sink at a mother's feet
With prayers so vain, so weak, so ill conceiv'd?
March. I'll hear no more, your suit is insolent.

Des.

Des. Oh! I conjure you, stay, a moment, hear!
Am I the only wretch you spurn in misery?
March. What, sir, have you to say to me?
Des. Do you remember this picture?
March. It once
Resembled me, but time, and ceaseless sorrow,
Are cruel spoilers on a woman's cheek:
How, sir, became it yours?
Des. By a friend's death;
It was bequeath'd me in this scroll enclos'd;
Oh! 'twas my only joy; I pause, and hang
From hour to hour o'er all its loveliness,
Till oft its features seem to glow with smiles,
And beam with soft regard.
March. Language like this
What must I call? insanity or vice?
Des. Read, read that scroll.
March. Why, sir, should I read it?
Des. Oh! it will shew you what this language means;
'Twill prove I am not criminal nor mad,
Unless tis guilt, or wild insanity
To ask a blessing from a long lost mother;
Or should my manner incoherent seem,
Tis that I play a part in scenes untried,
And for the first time hear a parent's voice.

March. I will read it—now, now, assist me, heaven!

(Reads the scroll, and afterwards tears it.)

You have devis'd this plan most artfully,
In time arrang'd, in all its parts complete;
But, sir, your malice breathes its poison vainly.
Insensate! to suppose, each rude unknown,
Could fix a blemish on my splendid fame,
That from the earliest dawn of sense or thought,
I've held as glorious as my father bore it,
Speckless and white as Pyrenean snow.
I'm told you are from England—I was taught
To love your nation, as of men of honor,
Not base conspirers 'gainst a woman's peace.

Des. Oh! will you drive me from your sacred presence;
Deserted, hopeless, exil'd, all unknown
To me the name of parents or of home?
Oh! am I not your son? is there a name
More dear, or of more suasive eloquence?

March. Most excellently well! your dark employers
May amply praise the finish'd actor's part.

Des. Oh spare these piercing wounds, prove me, try me,
My warm affection put to sternest trial,
Toil, danger, suff'ring, were delights to me;
Oh! could they purchase, in a mother's breast,

One

One thought of bliss, or calm one throb of woe.

March. One only favour I would beg of you.

Des. Oh! name it quick; my zeal outruns your words.

March. To leave me, and to think of me no more.

Des. That, madam, is indeed impossible.

March. So end such bold and lofty promises.

Des. Oh! say, what must the shipwreck'd sea-boy feel,
Who long with nervous arm hath boldly stemm'd
The boiling surge, till, as he reach'd the shore,
His failing vigour mocks his last attempt;
You lend your hand, then, as he grasps, forsake him,
What must he feel, when the next refluent wave
Shall hurl him back to death?

March. I trusted not
Your words, nor am surprised to find them air.
Why, sir, prolong a conversation still
Long painful to us both?

Enter JULIA.

Julia, my child!
How I rejoice to see you!

Des. My sister too!
Fair excellence! Oh kneel with me! entreat,

By all the sacred ties that children twine
Around the parent's heart!

Julia. What mean you, sir?

March. Leave me—begone—nor madly dare destroy
A daughter's rev'rence for her doating mother.

Julia. Alas! my mother, is it not enough
Some secret grief should prey upon your life,
Must cold, unfeeling insults tear the wound,
Oh! too too deep already?

March. Tis even so.

Julia. Why, why is this, sir?

March. Speak not, I charge you—but begone —my brain
Is all on fire.

Des. Oh! think of my despair.
Reflect—

March. I have reflected, and resolv'd;
And by the omnipotence of heaven, I swear,
You are a stranger to me, and for ever.

Des. Oh God! Oh God! *Exit.*

(The Marchioness sinks on a chair: the scene closes.)

SCENE III.—*A Street—the House of the Marquis.*

Enter LORD EDWARD.

L. Edw. I cannot doubt my friend's success—
tis strange,
This long eventful chain!

Enter DESMOND *from the House.*

Has she received you?

Des. Received me? yes—as a dog.

L. Edw. Is't possible?

Des. She drove me from her like a loathsome
beggar,
Whose cries became importunate.

L. Edw. Alas!

Des. Oh! what a niggard nature is to man!
The beasts that range the forest wild and rude,
And fright the ear of night with furious howl,
E'en they shall hang with rapture o'er their off-
spring,
Lament their loss; but man! this lordly man!

L. Edw. Come, come, despair not thus.

Des. All gracious heaven!
Withhold this specious gift of reason from him,
That makes him so presumptuous and so vain;
Give him but instinct, ign'rant to commit,
Or justify a wrong—tis horrible!

L. Edw.

L. Edw. Desmond, how fortune has connected us!
In early life we went to school together,
Still as we grew, the same pursuits allur'd,
One place, one study, form'd us for each other,
Our serious thoughts dwelt on our country's peace,
And similar amusements e'er beguil'd
Our lighter hours away; and now we meet
In the same foreign country, where our hopes
Rest on one family—we shall succeed together.

Des. Oh! did you know with what severity
She spoke to me—how she abhors and loaths me!
And then her daughter! Oh how lovely!

L. Edw. Most exquisitely lovely!

Des. To be spurn'd
By both, as last, and lowest of mankind!

L. Edw. When next you meet, her kindness shall repay
This stern severity; 'twas surely error!

Des. Never, never—unconquerable hate
Fills up the place of soft maternal love.
Oh! what a dreary vacancy is here!
No mother, sister, relative—I stand
As the scath'd oak upon the blasted heath,
With wintry desolation all around. *Exeunt.*

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The outside of a Convent, and a Church adjoining.*

Enter LORD EDWARD *and Desmond.*

Lord Edward.

MY hopes are ardent for you; 'twas mistake,
'Twas misconception of your meaning.
Zealous, enflam'd, impassion'd, you forgot
The nice distinctions of a woman's honor;
A letter is a calm expositor
Warm from the heart, as conversation free,
No fev'rish wand'rings that disorder both.

Des. I am not sanguine, I pursued your plan,
I wrote as you desir'd, expressly stating
The full extent of my most fervent wish.

L. Edw. Have courage then; her messenger e'en now
Requir'd my company; I shall bring tidings
To chase these clouds of sorrow from your brow.

Des.

Des. Farewell! this sacred edifice attracts my eye;
The holy gloom that reigns in silence here,
Suits the sad temper of a tortur'd mind,
More than these friendly prophecies of good.

Exeunt: Desmond into the church.

SCENE II.—*The inside of a Church.*

DON FERDINAND *rising from prayers before the image of a saint.*

Ferd. Tis past! creative brain! that throb'st so hot
With fancies wild, and forms incongruous,
Oh! have not twenty lengthen'd years of woe
Chill'd thee to peace? Where would'st thou hurry me?
What! shall the mad man glory in his chains?
Can smiles become the features of despair?
A visionary hand directs to heav'n;
And there with flaming sword the avenger stands
To bar my entrance—monstrous are my crimes,
And God will punish—in his holy temple
Nightly, I seek repose, where all around
The letter'd monument, records the hope

Of

Of him that died in righteousness. Away!
Tis wild delusion—no atoning prayer
Shall at the mercy-seat prevail for me.

Enter DESMOND.

Des. 'Twas mis'ry's voice, and I can doubly claim
Th' attention of the wretched! fellow man,
And fellow sufferer—stranger!

Ferd. Who art thou?
That dar'st approach the silent sanctuary
Of heav'n rejected men—haste to the world,
Mix with the gay, the happy, and the young:
I am alone, forgotten, miserable.

Des. I would console you in your misery.

Ferd. Console, young man? When the Almighty pow'r
In wrath dispenses judgments on the world,
When warring winds tear in wild hurricane,
Earth's fairest produce, sustenance of life,
When the red lightning, o'er the pealing sky
Flashing, anticipates the final doom,
These are my consolations.

Des. Why is this?
I am a wretch, like you, but still I hope.

Ferd. Hope! hope, "that comes to all, comes not to me."

Forgive

Forgive my tears, I am not us'd to kindness;
Here in God's sacred house, with holy men
I dwell, if haply time, and penitence, and pray'r,
My great offences may redeem—tis vain!

Des. Look up to heav'n, and humbly there repose;
He the poor mourner comforts.

Ferd. Oh! my thoughts
Are clogg'd with guilt, and sink remediless.
Or should my spirit, rapt in transient joy,
Ascend to visions of eternal mercy,
My holy brethren, cold, impartial judges,
Roar in my ears my complicated crimes,
And drag me back to torture and to hell.

Des. What deed is this, that so foretels its horror?

Ferd. The fatal day, in death's last agony,
Her fault'ring tongue implor'd me, and forgave.

Des. Oh! I conjure you, answer!

Ferd. You are young:
You should not hate mankind, and from your look
A charm steals over me, you should not hate me.

Des. This dark suspense is torture; speak, oh! speak.

Ferd. Then as the father of the injur'd saint
You'll curse my name, and flying, hate my sight.
But now you pitied me.

Des. Curse you? oh no!

Ferd.

Ferd. These, these are friendship's words, and strike again
On my worn mind, impressions scarcely known;
I could be garrulous, and pour before you
My crimes, my fears; you'll shudder at my guilt,
But not forsake the lonely penitent.

Des. I am myself unhappy, most unhappy,
But your misfortunes teach me how to suffer.

Ferd. Misfortunes, say you? oh! too light that name.

Des. Let me swear to you,

Ferd. Nay, swear not, young man,
These holy walls should echo better sounds;
I will believe you, I will tell you all:
You have a look that forces confidence.
Yes! you shall know my strangely guilty life;
Yet, should that eye still beam forgiveness on me,
My future days will lose their shade; oh, no!
What tale so full of horror ever blanch'd
The cheek with fear? Know, then, my rising youth,
Enslav'd to all the passions of our nature,
Was stain'd with murder!

Des. Alas! that word!

Ferd. You are not yet prepar'd; I will be regular
In my narration.

Des. Tranquillize yourself.

Ferd.

Ferd. Why should I poison your unpractis'd ear?
Tis silence best becomes my guilt and mis'ry.
Des. I will dwell with you, in my woes united,
And at our leisure we'll exchange our hist'ries.
Ferd. Then hear me now—'twere horror to deceive you.
Travelling in early life the provinces
Wash'd by the sea, I was attack'd by robbers;
Their savage treatment left me on the ground,
Faint with my wounds, almost bereft of life;
Returning sense the anxious care confess'd,
Of the poor tenant of a neighbouring hut,
Who kindly bore me, where his little all
Was prodigally spent on my recovery.
His only child—(a moment pardon me)
An unaffected, artless, lovely girl,
Sweet as the blushing rose, that wildly grew
Around her dwelling, she attended me;
I gain'd her confidence, and she would tell
The rustic loves of all the village swains,
How in the dance one sought to win his fair,
Another by his jests and merriment;
Then, in return, I oft would largely speak
Of the intrigues and plots of polish'd life,
Till she would raise her hands, and scarce believe
Such things could be—I lov'd this charming girl:
I had been taught to rush down passion's stream,

With

And you alone of men have e'er consol'd me.

Des. Dreadful indeed has been your guilt!
and great
Your punishment! but oh! if you regard
The tranquil peace that smooths the road of death,
And with the beams of hope illumes old age;
Attend to me.

Ferd. Attend to you? your voice
Awakens pleasure indescribable.

Des. Born in a land, by superstitious clouds
Obscur'd, darkling you ill explore the way
To life immortal; can it be for man,
Tho' rob'd in sacred vest, and in his hand
The censor holding, fragrant sacrifice,
To speak the judgments of the King of Kings?
Oh! would'st thou recognize the word of God,
Sink in thyself, oh man! and search it there:
The sacred monitor within presides,
With heaven's undoubted sword; tis conscience,
conscience;
When this approves, despise the voice of men,
Oh! tis the dawning of eternal day,
An emanation from the sapphire throne,
Beyond the grave to show'r its radiant flood,
Thro' space unlimited, and endless time.

Ferd. Fearless you speak, but youth is ever
rash.

Des.

Des. Tis not the arrogance of youth that guides me;
In happier climes, the aged, and the wise,
Have form'd their lives by sentiments like these.
What! shall the being of the moment measure
Eternal justice? shall imperfect man
Hold in his hand the balance of the skies?
Bid him go hurl the thunder, and the earth
Shake with his mighty nod—no! tis delusion!
These high pretenders, like yourself, are subject
To all the frailties of humanity;
Fly from their vengeance to the God of mercy.

Ferd. To doubt is sure perdition—peace! oh peace!

Des. Then doubt no longer, but pursue, unaw'd,
The call celestial: so shall your years
Glide peaceful on in soft tranquillity,
The hand of hope shall smooth your furrow'd brow,
And terror yield to reverential awe.

Ferd. Leave me! your rashness spreads new horror round.

Des. Reflect then on my words.

Ferd. Could I avoid it!
To doubt is impious, and impiety
Swells not the catalogue of my transgressions;
Young man, you've much to answer for.

Des.

Des. Be then
The punishment my own—farewell! remember
The attributes of heav'n know no bounds.
Exit.

(On a sudden the organ is heard, accompanied with voices.)

Ferd. Kneel, kneel, thou wretch! in humble penitence,
Lo! whisper'd soft as music's melting strain,
Around me floats the voice divine of mercy.
Exit.

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the House of the Marquis—The Marchioness alone.*

March. Ah no! such happiness cannot be mine;
E'en from my cradle I was mark'd for woe.
His letter!—oh! tis scarcely legible,
So blotted with my tears—much it insists
On secrecy—his meaning of that word
He prov'd to day in presence of my daughter.
On secrecy? from some much honor'd friend
'Twere treachery to conceal our inmost thoughts,
And he too has his friend, that friend, another,
Till the whole world, of secret trusts may babble.
As of the common news of every day;

I'll try him further—Edward's open temper
Will on the hint disclose how far—

Enter the MARQUIS *and* JULIA, *as from walking.*

Mar. Amelia!

March. My lord, and Julia! you return surprises.

Mar. (Aside) Her agitation each succeeding hour
Alarms me more.

March. Have you walk'd far, my lord?

Mar. First answer me—you have receiv'd an insult
From the rash youth I prais'd so idly to you?
I ask no confidence, but to protect you,
This is a privilege I'll ne'er forego.

March. Still will you probe the wounds you cannot heal,
And with officious zeal exasperate
The pain beyond all human power to soothe!
Oh! by th' affection you have ever borne me,
(How ill deserv'd, I feel! how ill return'd!)
By all your sacred vows and promises,
Deeply to veil suspicion's prying eye;
By the affliction of a suffering spirit,
Condemn'd to pine in solitary woe,
I must conjure you still to pardon me,
Tho' I lament and meet my wrongs alone.

Mar.

Mar. (Aside) From others I'll extort an explanation. *Exit.*

March. His sudden anger shews some dread, suspicion.
Away, that thought! You seem dejected, Julia,
Lord Edward holds a more despotic sway
Than you would fain allow. *(Aside)* Alas! alas!
Must both my children tremble at my name?

Julia. No, no, my mother! he is lost for ever;
And should he talk again of golden hopes,

March. You'll knit your brow with sage experience,
And preach upon the world's uncertainty.

Julia. With you I'll live, and kiss the starting tear
Away—I shall be happy so employ'd.

March. Ah, Julia! did you know, how many tears
This short distress has cost your doating mother,
No more—but say, where was your morning walk?

Julia. Amongst the objects of your gracious bounty,
And we return, loaded with grateful sighs,
And long-drawn prayers of thankfulness to you,
Who pity-like still follow fortune's steps,
Pouring in oil where'er she blindly wounds;
But tis the manner that endears the gift,

When all the distance of your rank forgotten,
You bend to hear the tale of poverty,
And speak the words, that, as the dew of heav'n,
Revive the flower just with'ring on its stem.
Oh! with what fervor did the helpless orphan
Cling to my knees, and lisp his reverence,
As still his untaught gaze presented to him
A likeness to his noble benefactress;
Then, then, my dearest mother, did I pray,
Not to resemble you in form alone.

March. (Aside) All gracious God! oh hear
but half that prayer!

Julia. We were reminded of a circumstance,
Fixt on the poor man's heart indelibly;
The grateful have unfailing memories,
Nor has the day, your honor'd birth recalling,
Escap'd their fond congratulating joy.

March. My birth-day! yes, I had forgotten it,
'Twas on this day I drew the vital air,
When, as I slept upon my mother's breast,
She gaz'd with rapture on her first-born child,
Then rais'd her eyes in gratitude to heaven.
Oh! blindness to the future! forty suns
Have run their course, and oft have I beheld
Their splendor thro' my tears—my honor'd parents
Are in the grave—Alvarez' pride is past;
I stand alone, the representative,

The

The weak and fading representative,
Of all the world deem proud and glorious.
Oh! my father, if from the converse high,
Of angels and archangels, where thou sit'st
Enthron'd, thou condescendest to regard,
Thy once lov'd child on earth, protect her still!

Jul. My dearest mother!

March. Julia, I consider
This day an eminence, presenting boldly,
In retrospective view, my various life.

Julia. And tis a vision of resplendent colours.
Oh! should some spot less bright attract your eye,
Less dazzling brilliant than your soul demands,
Let not the precepts, I have heard so oft
With fond delight, fall from your lips in vain;
See, see, you've said, how ill the best, the wisest,
Can bear the test of self-examination;
Fir'd with the zeal of action, they suppose
The heights of virtue plac'd within their reach;
But when their wearied nature makes a pause,
And shews the prospect, as it is, before them,
They fly the rugged path, the steep ascent,
And own their progress tardy and imperfect.

March. Sweet are your consolations, dearest Julia,
Oft as the rolling year recalls the day,
When first I clasp'd you to my beating heart.
Each thought, and action past, each present feeling
Shall

Shall pour a flood of happiness around you ;
I shall forget my sorrows in the grave,
You, you shall be respected and ador'd.

Julia. The grave? Oh! speak not thus.

March. The transient night
Displac'd by day eternal.

Julia. But for me, my mother,
Remedilesss despair.

March. Why, why should grief
Be woo'd and courted as our sovereign good?
But see, Lord Edward—leave us, dearest Julia!

Exit Julia.

Enter LORD EDWARD.

L. Edw. Madam, should I describe, in strictest truth,
The joy it gives me to obey your call,
Alone of all the world you would not trust me.

March. I had believed you once, tho' scarcely now;
Oh! have I not appear'd some fatal pow'r,
That pointed to the glitt'ring form of bliss,
And when you grasp'd, derided your attempt.

L. Ed. Still magic hope threw all her spells around me.

March. Alas! for me! in earliest life she broke

Her

Her wand, and with the shining fragments strew'd
The cold and thankless earth. *(Aside)* I would
secure
My daughter's happiness, by giving her
To him alone deserving such a prize.
L. Ed. But shall we leave you, madam, desolate?
March. No, no, fear not.
L. Edw. Now you inspire a thought,
So big with joy, the pow'rs of language fail.
March. (Aside) What means this sudden transport? Ah! betray'd.
Let me collect myself, and try him farther.
L. Edw. Alas! she trembles.
March. Oh! if a mother's pray'r
Avail you ought, you will be blest indeed.
L. Edw. Now in the presence of your lovely daughter,
Oh let me pour my soul in gratitude.
March. What! still the same, my lord? still restless ever?
I must enjoin you momentary penance,
For thus submitting to so cold a plan.
Your friends had scarcely known your character.
The name of friend brings to my memory
Some information I receiv'd this morning,
Of a young man but just arriv'd from England:
You live with him in closest intimacy.

As

As you can now no longer think yourself
A visitor unwelcome, he perhaps
Will oft attend you—I admire your country—
I shall rejoice to see him.

L. Edw. To see him ?
I—I—I—introduc'd him to the marquis.

March. He follows your example, I conclude,
And wisely spends the hours of active life
In gleaning, from the treasures of the world,
Stores where old age may dwell with avarice,
The pleasing recollections of the past ;
Nay, let me not distress you—he may be
Commission'd on some secret embassy.

L. Edw. Tis usual, madam, for our English youth
To visit foreign countries.

March. I rejoice
He deems the Spaniard worthy his regard.

L. Ed. Deeply degraded would he sink beneath
The rank of wise or good, could he involve
In one all sweeping stigma of contempt
A numerous people.

March. He concludes his travels,
And visits us, perhaps, on his return.
The compliment were greater, to have made us
An earlier object of his curious view.
Is he much known in Spain ?

L. Edw.

L. Edw. So noble is he,
So pleasing in his manners, and so great
In all the higher qualities of mind
And heart—

March. I doubted not his excellence,
Though should I find him as mysterious
As you, his friend, appear in his behalf,
I shall regard him with some slight suspicion.

L. Ed. Oh! never was suspicion plac'd so ill;
He was my early friend, and well I know
The inmost foldings of his valued nature;
The best affections warm his glowing breast,
And all the gentle charities of home
Soften his youth—a firm and manly sense
Directs and rules their bold luxuriance:
For situations eminently form'd,
Where worldly prudence claims a sacrifice,
A flow'ry garland on the shrine of fame,
No hapless victim bleeding at the heart.

March. (Aside) Ah! is it so? This praise is singular,
Embracing an event unknown to me;
Had you inform'd him of your residence
In this our city?

L. Edw. No—mutual wonder
Encreas'd the pleasure of our meeting here.

March. Has he no other friend, in converse sweet,

To wile away the careless hour of leisure?

L. Edw. No other friend, alas! no other refuge!

March. Boasts he a splendid name, and rich in honor?

L. Edw. The name of accident—no pompous rites
Proclaim'd the sound of long-transmitted glory.
In early life, torn from the parent tree,
And driv'n away by all the winds of heaven,
To die unshelter'd on the common road.

March. My lord, you err—he was not so bereft
Of fortune's blessings—Oh! forgive my warmth,
A thought occurr'd—well, I release you now.

L. Edw. How shall I answer you? Oh let me plead
For him, the best, the noblest of mankind.

March. Are you so warm a friend? so cold a lover?
I'd fain believe this high-ton'd eulogy.
Your friend is noble, gen'rous, great, and good,
And still unerring, treads the line of honor;
I doubt it not, keep him, and cherish him,
But were I Julia, I should deem these praises
Somewhat too long for an expected lover.

L. Ed. I will entreat her pardon, madam—farewell. *Exit.*

March.

March. Tis as I fear'd—and shall I prostrate low,
The hopes of twenty years beneath his feet?
This is his secrecy—his promise, this—
To force me to proclaim him as my son!
To bind me to the stake, and then to triumph.
Tis vain—let me be faithful to myself;
His bold assertions shall not long prevail,
Tho' back'd by scorn, and pointing contumely;
He spurns my prayer, he now shall feel my power.
Exit.

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment of* DESMOND'S.

DESMOND *alone.*

Des. No answer yet! my messenger detain'd!
Was Edward right? and will he tidings bring
To chase these clouds of sorrow from my brow?
If not, I'll fly the world, and dwell for ever
With yon poor outcast wretch! Oh! this suspense
Were well displac'd by certainty of ill.
But soft—

Enter the MARQUIS DE EBOLI.

The Marquis!

Mar.

Mar. I can believe, sir, I am most unwelcome.

Des. Why so, my lord? have I offended you?

Mar. Our notions of offence, it may appear,
Are widely different—Sir, I've been told,
By one, whose nature tis to soften wrongs,
Of insults deep you offer'd to a lady,
Whom to protect I deem my proudest boast.
I come, sir, to demand an explanation.

Des. I am not us'd to answer questions urg'd
In tones so loud and high. May I demand
If the offended lady thus inform'd you?

Mar. You conjecture shrewdly, sir,
And seem a man of words—I hate them.
A stranger in our country, you employ
Your earliest hour of leisure to insult
A lady, rich in the esteem of all.
Was honor silent? manly feeling dead?
When sex and loveliness found no distinction?
Tis not your character alone degraded,
But e'en your nation falls. Hereafter, sir,
Your countrymen unjustly will complain,
Should their arrival find a colder welcome.

Des. My lord, tis easy to perceive your meaning,
You'll find I answer not such taunts as these
By words.

Mar. And explanation you refuse.

Des. When urg'd so proudly.

Mar.

Mar. Th' alternative
Will soon occur to one so quick at guessing.
Des. I am prepar'd for it.
Mar. What! instantly?
Des. Instantly.
Mar. Then follow me—there is a place
Not distant far, will suit our purpose well.
Des. Lead on, my lord. *Exeunt.*

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment of the* MARQUIS DE EBOLI.

MARCHIONESS, *and her* PAGE.

Marchioness.

HOW was it, boy? *(Aside)* My countless griefs roll on,
Each in succession greater than the last,
Soon, soon to burst on my devoted head.
How was it, say? my husband and my son?
(aside.)
But they escap'd unhurt—both, both unhurt.

Page. The marquis, madam, was but slightly wounded,
A mere scratch in the sword arm—oh! tis nothing.

March. And his antagonist! where, where is he?
The wand'ring sword made no impression there?

Page.

Page. Dear madam, no—what warm benevolence!
Thus anxious to consider e'en your foe.
March. This is no time for words—oh! tell me all;
Relieve my fears, or let me weep in sorrow.
Page. Rejoice then, madam, in the mutual safety:
At the first onset, all too warm for skill,
The marquis was disarm'd—to raise his hand
Against the man who nobly spar'd his life,
His soul refus'd—they separated, madam,
Each to the other wishing happiness.
March. Tis well—I breathe again—go, leave me, boy. *Exit Page.*
The order I obtain'd from government,
Enjoining his departure from Madrid,
Ere this is serv'd—he will for ever leave me;
For ever! said I? Why did he betray me?

Enter LORD EDWARD.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

L. Edw. Madam, my friend,
March. How, wounded, say you?
L. Edw. I will be more collected—pardon me,
For thus alarming you with causeless fears.

March.

March. He is not wounded then—so I have heard.

L. Edw. His contest with the marquis terminated
As all your anxious hopes could point.

March. Not so;
Still more propitious were th' event to me,
Had the receiver of so slight a wound
Escap'd by giving it his adversary.

L. Edw. But now, this adversary claims your pity,
For woes that would oppress a ruder spirit;
Hard by your gate, as silently he stood,
Attending my return, an officer
Presented from authority an order,
Commanding him expressly to depart
From Spain, with penalties for disobeying.

March. As one, no doubt, whose contest with the marquis
Bespoke a disposition wild and dang'rous.

L. Edw. The duel past, his mind, tho' gentle, warm,
Had scarcely reassum'd its usual tone;
And, madam, I must say, a fav'rite scheme,
Where he had treasur'd up his choicest hopes,
Had lately fail'd, and left him desolate.
Thus ill prepar'd to suffer new affliction,
The stern address, with which the officer

Perform'd

Perform'd his duty, vex'd and harass'd him;
High words between them pass'd, till my poor
friend,
(Alas! what griefs that so could irritate
A temper form'd for every mildest duty!)
Struck to the ground his rude antagonist.
March. And what follow'd?
L. Edw. A crowd, collecting quickly,
Reliev'd the fallen man, and Desmond—
March. What would you say?
L. Edw. Was dragg'd to prison, madam.
March. To prison! say you? what! midst
the gaping crowd,
That scorn'd and hooted at him as he pass'd?
And was he treated as a common felon,
The refuse of the earth, loaded with crime?
Did the low minion of authority
Seize him by force, and mock him in his mis'ry?
Alas! I wildly talk—you see, my lord,
How warm an interest, in all you wish
Possesses me. Yourself shall tidings bear
Of his deliverance—tis but to explain.
Retires to a table, and writes.
L. Edw. She loves him still—Oh! could some
suasive power
Teach her, how easy tis to reconcile
This fond affection with the world's regard;
How men would still do homage to her name,

While in the hour of silence and retirement,
A mother's love might dare to pour a smile.

MARCHIONESS *returns with a letter.*

Madam, how shall my valued friend repay
The debt he owes you?

March. In your thanks, my lord.
Think you my influence could be employ'd
More as I wish, than in assisting him
Lord Edward honours with the name of friend?

L. Edw. Deep in my heart, with all its pride united,
I feel this high distinguishing regard;
Yet when I mark'd the gen'rous zeal that pour'd
Its warmest sorrow o'er my friend's misfortune,
Forgive me, if the glow that flush'd your cheek,
Seem'd of a brighter hue than friendship claims.

March. My lord, your language has of late assum'd
A flow'ry dress, that wounds the feelings more
Than it offends the taste—away with it!
I love the plainness of a noble nature,
These lofty tones resemble foppery.

L. Edw. Yes—yes—tis true—this cold disguise becomes
But ill the pray'r that trembles on my tongue.

March. Disguise and prayer?

L. Edw.

L. Edw. Oh! madam, I intreat you,
When you remember how I honor you,
How I adore you—that to you, alone,
I owe a blessing all too great for words,
You cannot err upon my motives—no—
You must ascribe my conduct to the wish
Alone of giving happiness to her,
From whom my own flows in such bounty o'er me.
March. When did I doubt your purity of mind?
Or when refuse to hear you?
L. Edw. Never, never,
Yet now I tremble as I speak.
March. My lord,
Should this long prologue no result forebode,
Beneath yourself to speak, or me to hear,
What cause to tremble?
L. Ed. Oh! pardon these suspicions;
Yet why, why this reserve? why so averse
To understand my meaning? Madam, my friend,
March. Yes, what of him? say, can I serve him farther?
L. Edw. Oh! you've form'd your resolution then,
Alas! should my persuasions pow'rless fall,
Forget, forgive, or deem them still unheard.
March. Well, sir, proceed.
L. Edw. Madam, I would believe,

At least, so partial hope would flatter me,
Your resolution to disown my friend,
Who fain would boast—

March. My lord, beware, my foes
Are rous'd, awake, and catch with eagerness
The darkest hint, and blazon it to day:
Where language fails, the sign, the nod, the smile,
Fill up the chasm words have scarcely left.
There now is found an instrument most apt
To sanction malice—fly the base example,
For you I gave up all—the sacred refuge,
When still one sunny beam around me play'd,
I gave to you—have I deserv'd this blow?
Tis not from you.

L. Edw. Yes! more than life I owe you,
And tis to soothe your bosom to its peace,
To spread that sunny beam o'er all your days,
I dare to speak—Madam, your son deserves
That name.

March. My lord! My lord!

L. Edw. Oh! he is honour's throne;
Had I a secret buried in my heart
Twin'd with the "ties that bind me to the world,"
To him I'd give it, all-confiding, fearless,
And sleep, as still myself alone possess'd it.

March. Tis false.

L. Edw. Oh! what is false?

March. He is not that man.

L. Edw.

L. Edw. You surely wrong him.

March. Can wrong exist,
Where no necessity enforces right?
I know him not—he is a stranger to me;
He seems employ'd to slander and traduce me.
Where is the wrong, if I assert my fame,
Repel the evil, and detest the accuser?

L. Edw. Oh! hear me but a moment, while I tell
His proudest hope.

March. No more, my lord, I charge you.

L. Edw. Tis not his wish to be avow'd your son.

March. Perish that name! tis blackest slander all!

L. Edw. Oh! hear him call you by the name mother.

March. I hate his malice—I despise his weakness.

L. Edw. When soft retirement gives those sacred names
Their best, their most authoritative sound,
Oh! let the son and mother fondly weep
On sorrows past—I'll hasten to his prison.

March. His prison? there let him die by slow disease;
In the deep dungeon, where the air confin'd,
Knows not the breeze of heav'n, or the change
Divine

Divine of night or morn, let chilling damps
Surround his brow, and sink into his heart;
Let galling iron waste his palsied limbs;
Let famine scowl with all her furies round him;
Or on the public scaffold, mock'd and scorn'd,
There let him expiate his crime, and pay
The life my injur'd fame demands.

L. Edw. Horror on horror. *Exit.*

March. I burn—I burn—oh! tis all madness here;
But soft, soft, let me think, my son in prison?
Subject to all its dire calamities,
All the dread curses a revengeful mother
Could dare to imprecate? Almighty God!
Oh! yet, I'll save him—yes, yes, he shall live
To grace the world—tho' not, tho' not for me.

Exit.

SCENE II.—*A Prison.* DESMOND *alone.*

Des. Is this the welcome to my native land?
Is this the fairy region, warmly glowing
With golden hues, beneath affection's rays?
Bear up, my soul, and if thou canst, rejoice
Still in the dignity of rectitude.
Oh mother! yet no mother! why thus doom
To dark despair the son that could adore thee?

Enter

Enter PROVOST.

How soon will my confinement satisfy
The malice of that man?

Pro. Tis not the man,
Offended law you have to satisfy.

Des. When shall I be releas'd?

Pro. Justice moves slowly,
Should not some person, high in dignity,
Exert himself to plead in your behalf.

Des. Oh! wretched, wretched country! where the law
Bought by the rich, to subjugate the poor,
Strikes deeper still the wounds by fortune given,
And punishes no crime but poverty.
Yet why complain? what is the world to me?
Should this drear vault become its sister-grave,
No tear shall fall for my untimely fate.

Pro. I cannot choose but pity the poor youth!

Des. She, she, who should have mourn'd with madd'ning woe,
And strew'd my tomb with her dishevell'd hair,
Will smile and laugh thro' all the welcome tale.

Pro. *(Aside)* I ne'er saw one so worthy my compassion
As this young foreigner. Oh! would 'twere not
Against the oath of duty and my office,
To give him liberty—how light his fault! *Exit.*

Des.

Des. See there! by heav'n he pities me!—
even he
Whose 'stern employ must quench the heav'nly
spark
Of sympathy, laments his fellow man.
Is it for her, whose sex forms her for all
The softest feelings of humanity,
And bound by nature's strictest, holiest tie,
For her alone to spurn me and oppress me?

Enter LORD EDWARD.

L. Edw. Oh! meet we thus?
Des. My dungeon is within.
Your looks proclaim my fate—well, be it so,
'Twas not enough my life should be expos'd
In contest with her husband—had I fallen
She had been satisfied—as I survive
The gloomy horrors of a prison wait me.
L. Edw. Who but must weep, to pause and
meditate
On the mix'd character of mortal life;
E'en those of heav'nly mould, by nature form'd
To emulate the soaring poet's dream,
Who follow virtue with a passion's warmth,
And with fond zealous industry collect
The scatter'd opportunities of good,
They rise so high to fall a lower depth;

Some

Some cherish'd feeling, lurking long unseen,
Rous'd by the transient touch of accident,
Starts into action with resistless force,
And virtue's lovely fabric tears away.

Des. I trace the windings of her policy,
Had my wrung bosom felt a colder pang,
Had this unhappy nature borne the wrong,
Her patience then had tried the exile's mandate,
Or thus imprisoned me for disobeying.

L. Edw. Oh! my poor friend!

Des. Away these gloomy thoughts!
Say, Edward, are my prophecies fulfill'd?
Are you restor'd to happiness and Julia?

L. Edw. What! have you leisure, mid such deep'ning woes
To dwell upon another's bliss?

Des. Edward,
Standing alone, as I am in the world,
The current of my blood check'd and damm'd up,
Cut off from nature's highest privilege,
No mother, sister, relative, to soothe
With soft affection's tones my lonely hours,
All the blest feelings, that in happier men
Flow thro' a thousand channels, find in me
But one direction, eddying round my friend.
Then pour your joys in my attentive ear;
Yet no—ah who would tear the sacred veil,
That hides from common gaze love's secrecy,

The

The beaming smile of reconcil'd distress,
The glance that promises eternal truth?

L. Edw. Alas! what sad experience taught that sigh,
To chill the glowing picture of your fancy?

Des. Yes, yes, I knew a Julia once, lovely
As yours, and oh! as well belov'd; but heav'n,
(Let me not murmur at his great decree)
When she had scarcely told her eighteenth year,
Tore her from earth—where shall I fly for refuge?
Where in the dark drear desert of the world,
Shall such a wretch as I am find a home?

L. Edw. Fly to the friendship of the man that knows you;
Oh! still sustain him by your great example,
Still lead the way in virtue, honor, glory,
Mark where your country bleeds by secret wounds,
And boldly teach that policy is justice.
We pass'd the studies of our youth together,
Let us grow old, our thoughts the same, our efforts
By prudence greater.

Des. How low I am sunk!
When all this manly counsel distant seems,
And reaches not my heart! I hate myself.

L. Edw. My Julia I'll instruct to love her brother.

Des. As the destroyer of her mother's peace,
As the intruder on her fondest hopes,

As

As a poor outcast, every where unknown,
Unfriended, unacknowledg'd, spurn'd, rejected;
I saw a wretch just now, my fit companion,
With him I'll live, buried in privacy,
And there forget a world that owns not me.

L. Edw. Desmond, what mean you? who, who is this wretch?

Des. Hard by the western gate you mark'd the pile
That rears its front in ancient majesty:
The neighbouring convent proves its sacred use.
Sequester'd there, in holy guise, there dwells
A man whose crimes exclude him from mankind,
And from the hopes of blest futurity;
Thro' twenty years he drags his suff'ring frame,
Yet from the grave's dark brink still starts with horror.

L. Edw. Did he disclose his guilt?

Des. Thro' all its progress.
His hollow voice struck on my wond'ring ear,
As thro' the holy aisle it murmur'd low;
When I approach'd and spoke, he shudd'ring drew
His hood upon his brow, and pass'd away;
But turning quick, from his dark eye he shot
A side-long glance, that in a moment seem'd
To measure me at full, and to decide
Each feature of my character; then placing
Himself

Himself before me, slow perus'd my face,
And I perceiv'd a tear break from its fount,
That had appear'd dried up, and void, and course
Along his furrow'd cheek, worn deep by care,
Rather than age—resolving, hesitating,
His words, half utter'd, unexplain'd, were lost,
Till confidence, encreasing as he gaz'd,
He pour'd his guilt and sorrow all before me.

L. Edw. Tis very strange—what is his history?

Des. I tremble to repeat—by passion madden'd,
A lady high in family seducing,
By arts I fear too horrible to name,
For still her spotless virtue was his praise,

L. Edw. Did he not marry her?

Des. He was married;
But to obtain an union with his victim,
Murder'd his wife! the sword of law was sheath'd
In gold, but still one monitor remain'd,
Unbought, unbrib'd, whose awful voice gave judgment,
And sentenc'd him to cloister'd solitude,
To dwell with his own thoughts in mute despair.

L. Edw. Say, did you learn his name?

Des. Oh no! I spar'd him
Such a confession.

L. Edw. Twenty years, said you?
The lady in misfortune still rever'd,

As

As virtue's brightest model or its theme.
And gazing on you with an eye of fondness,
As you resembled one he once had lov'd.

Des. What thought is this? it was a father's gaze,
It is, it is, it must be so—in prison?
I had endur'd it patiently till now.
One moment's freedom would I gladly purchase,
By my whole life pass'd here—by life itself.

L. Edw. Be calm—be calm—my friends are high in rank.
Trust me, their power can ope these gloomy gates
I leave you to solicit your release.

Des. Haste, Edward, haste—you leave me on the rack,
A moment's liberty is all I ask. *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Another Apartment in the Prison.*

PROVOST, *the* MARCHIONESS *veiled.*

March. The order! you'll receive it on the moment,
You may anticipate—look on this ring.
You cannot doubt my word, so deeply pledg'd,
Were I to tell my name, you'd quickly own,
How ill deceit became a rank like mine,
My birth secures you—go, go release him.

Pro.

Pro. I will obey, tho' at some hazard lady.
Exit.

March. Oh! I am faint—yes, I must rest awhile.

(Sinks on a chair and unveils.)

What noise was that? haply the final groan!
The last, sad, earthly effort of despair,
And the vex'd spirit flies to meet its doom,
Where, where am I? I'll try to leave these horrors.
Rises.

Enter the MARQUIS.

Mar. Amelia, your disguise but ill conceals
The purpose of your visit, or its object.
What shall I think of your mysterious conduct?
The frequent start, the ever ready tear,
And now the bold desertion of your rank,
To walk on foot thro' Madrid's crouded streets,
And at the prison gate solicit entrance.

March. It is enough, enough—the dreaded hour is come.

Mar. Surely I am not of suspicious nature.

March. Haste to thy grave—yes, yes, it is prepar'd.

Mar. Why not repose on this adoring breast?

March. Unbar, ye ministers, the gloomy cell.
Pour forth its care-worn tenant, to behold

One

One plung'd in deeper mis'ry than him,
And let him smile again.

Mar. Confide in me.

March. Never, my lord—I have respected you,
But confidence I promis'd not, I cannot give.
Why should you wish it? other means there are
To satisfy your thoughts—each action mark,
Each footstep trace, search in my looks,
Each casual word! note it—and set it down.
You have inquiries now. I could not check them.

Mar. When I observ'd you leave your house alone,
On foot, I felt a curiosity
I own too strong t' oppose.

March. Remain, my lord,
And gratify this curiosity.
Ask why I came, and how I was employ'd,
With whom I spoke, whose name escap'd my lips,
What thoughts these eyes too eloquently told,
If mirth gave flippant quickness to my words,
Or sorrow drew them out to tedious length,
All this and more, and should the story faulter,
Let shrewd suspicion give it all its length. *Exit.*

Mar. Who is this object of opposing passions?
She hates, yet loves—and seeks him, yet avoids.
She spurns him now, now visits him in prison.
Oh! she is virtuous, or the radiant forms,
That confidence inspire in mortal breasts,

Are

Are as the passing air unstable all,
And earth itself a fabl'd mockery. *Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Church*, DON FERDINAND *asleep at the foot of the Altar.*

TWO MONKS.

1st Monk. How sound he sleeps!

2nd Monk. Such slumber is not usual.

1st Monk. The dreams of guilty men are horrible.

2nd Monk. Yet sometimes are the messengers, 'tis said,
Of joy and hope, and bright forms introduce,
The dawn dispels.

1st Monk. Have you observ'd him long?

2nd Monk. My glass has almost run its sandy hour,
Since first I mark'd him on his stony couch,
His whole frame trembl'd once with strong alarm,
And he pronounc'd the words, spare me, oh spare!

1st Monk. Unhappy man!

2nd Monk. But, brother, hear, what follow'd!
A sudden smile beam'd from his countenance,
Oh! such a smile, as we are wont to fancy,
In spirits elect, around the living throne,
Hymning

Hymning eternal praises—rapt, I gaz'd,
And quick, methought, his rude and care-worn features,
Assum'd the rosy hue of guiltless youth.
Not the possession of a thousand worlds,
Had brib'd me, brother, to disturb him then.

1st Monk. Well, well, his penitence has been sincere,
And this is its reward—on, on, good brother.

Exeunt.

Enter DESMOND.

Tumultuous thoughts chase one another on,
And scarce my passive mind sustains their progress
What ho! awake, arise!

Ferd. My guardian angel!
Oh, I have seen such visions in my slumber;
Methought, a purple cloud, with glory circl'd,
That shot its starry points on all sides far,
Came gliding down the blue expanse of ether,
And rested on a flow'ry hill before me.
Then from the low'ring centre forth there stepp'd
A form of blended majesty and love,
Youthful he was, yet awful—on his brow
Enthron'd sat dignity, but his soft eye
Seem'd chrystallized by tears for human frailty.
He held the lyre divine, and with the touch

Of zephyr swept the golden wire that breath'd
Heaven's harmony—the theme surpassed the song:
'Twas peace on earth—benevolence to men.

Des. Forgive intrusion on these sacred glories,
Prophetic, I would hope, of future bliss.
No common feelings guide my venturous tongue;
You, you, alone, can solve a doubt that vibrates,
Thro' every fibre of my tortured frame.

Ferd. Speak, I will answer you: why hesitate?

Des. Tell me the name of her, the fatal fair,
Whose charms resistless sway'd your youthful breast,
And rais'd your hand to do the murd'rous deed,

Ferd. Peace, peace! oh any task but this impose,
And my consent shall e'en out-run your words.

Des. By the blest hours of careless infancy,
When to the throne of heav'n your thoughts aspir'd,
Untainted, undisguis'd—by all th' affection
Your parents bore you—by their honor'd shades,
By the unhappy death of her who own'd
The first emotions of your earliest love,
By your repented guilt, and these new hopes
Breath'd as you slept before the sacred altar,

Ferd. By these, and more, I've sworn deep to conceal
That name: spare me.

Des.

Des. Oh was that name d' Alvarez?

Ferd. You touch a chord, that, as it vibrates, breaks.

Des. Was it Amelia d'Alvarez?

Ferd. What fiend art thou
From lowest depths of hell remorseless sent,
With Gorgon serpents arm'd to gnaw and sting me.

Des. Oh! answer me, was, was her name d'Alvarez?

Ferd. All gracious powers forgive me! 'twas d'Alvarez.

Des. Then let me call you by the name of father.

Ferd. Pray, mock me not, young man, my woes
O'erflow already.

Des. Oh! will you disown me?
Is none so wretched as to call me son?

Ferd. Yes, I should know that eye all eloquent,
Those features, oh! how like to those I once
Ador'd with such devotion: touch me not,
Lest in my arms the wrath of heaven should fall,
At once confounding innocence and guilt.

Des. Oh no! the ruler of that heaven applauds
When thus a son receives his long lost father.

Rushes into his arms.

Ferd. My son! my son!

Des. Oh happiness!

Ferd. Speak not
Of happiness—far from the shelt'ring arm
Of fond paternal love, you have encounter'd
Adversity in all its rudest forms.
And now still more unfortunate you find
A wretched exile, driven by crimes unheard,
From haunts of men, adult'rous, murderous,
With crimes so deep, as almost to distrust
Almighty mercy, him, you find a father.
Oh! I must weep to think of all I might have been,
And what I am—'tis you have given me tears!
Indeed I thought I ne'er should weep again.
Well—well—well—say when saw you your mother,
Where is she?

Des. In Madrid.

Ferd. In health?

Des. In health.

Ferd. Great God, receive my thanks, but is she happy?
Oh I remember her bright day of glory.
When in youth's rosy pride she walk'd the round
Of highest fashion, by her playful wit
Disarming envy of its pois'nous shaft,
Securing empire by disdaining it.
Cheer'd by the zephyr of the prosp'rous south,
Uprose the flow'r, of winter's cold regardless,

Till

Till the rude blast, impower'd with double fury,
Laid all its beauty low—tell me, my son,
Does she pronounce the name of Ferdinand ?

Des. Compose your harass'd soul—deeply retir'd
Within your sacred chancel, we'll recount
Each to the other at our leisure, all
The wond'rous incidents that mark our lives:
Pause o'er the thoughts meek penitence inspires,
Yet deeply grieve, as all such thoughts were vain,
With trembling flight approach that blest abode,
Where e'en the best must fear, the worst may hope. *Exeunt.*

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the house of the* MARQUIS.

Enter the MARCHIONESS *and* DESMOND.

Marchioness.

HOW long, sir, will your visits thus insult me?
To talk of honour were superfluous,
With him, who tramples on a woman's fame,
But the just feelings of a wounded pride,
Might sure prevent the second degradation,
Of a repulse repeated.

Des. Oh! reflect
Upon my thoughts, my hopes, my wishes, motives.

March. I cannot search beyond your actions, sir;
Their tendency appears to stain my name,
To draw the finger of derision on me,

Both

Both thro' the shady walks of sacred home,
And where the public pour their louder censure.
Motives! the constant cant of hypocrites,
Or, at the best, a poor apology,
To acquit the heart by sacrifice of judgment.
When the assassin strikes the murd'rous blow,
When the fell sland'rer darts his poison round,
When the seducer triumphs o'er his victim,
Yes, one and all, in the extreme of crime,
Shall plead their motives, and demand forgiveness.

Des. So warm in indignation Madam?

March. So greatly wrong'd.

Des. Madam, I come not now
To sting you by reproaches, or solicit
Favour; ere yet I leave Madrid for ever,
Tis all my wish to do an act of justice,
Restoring you your own.

March. Well, sir, proceed.
Ye heav'nly powers! when shall my trials cease?

Des. In the affection of your son who loves you,
Your son, who still adores you.

March. Yet uncheck'd?
But by this second injury you prove
How weak to take no vengeance on the first!

Des. No vengeance? Madam. I reproach you not,
I did not come with such intent.

March.

March. Well, sir.

Des. I hasten to the purpose of my visit.
Nurs'd as I was in indolence and wealth,
Tho' from the hour of lisping innocence,
I've wanton'd soft on pleasure's lap of roses,
I spurn its luxuries, its fragrant joys,
Stung by the thorn that keenest wounds the soul,
An obligation from the hand of one,
Who mocks and laughs at all my dearest claims;
Here will you find a solemn restitution
Of the rich blessings of your bounteous hand;
What should I do with wealth? a lonely being,
Disown'd, rejected, unacknowledg'd, banish'd,
Blest with no friend but heaven, the friend of all,
I have no use for riches—they are yours

Offering a paper.

March. What! would you bribe me to destroy myself?
Oh! why, sir, am I thus th' unpitied mark,
Of all this deep relentless persecution?

Des. Why, rather, say, as pestilence you spurn me,
Oh, why oppress me with such vile upbraidings,
Why are the feelings of your nature silent?
Why, why refuse to own your long lost son?
But I entreat you, pardon me, 'twas not
My wish to say so much—your words extort it.

I would

I would but satisfy the rules of honor,
And guiltless stand of mercenary views.

March. Honor? oh sacred word, how misapplied!
Tis but another name for excellence,
The last fine polish of the virtuous mind,
That nicely balances its means and purpose,
And seeks no object thro' disgraceful paths.

Des. I understand you; yet imagine one
From childhood rais'd above the common fate,
In education, wealth, and circumstance.
Along the tide of smooth prosperity
His little bark, with purple pendants flying,
Each breeze that urg'd him, full, not dangerous,
Sail'd beauteous on—envied his passage was;
Thro' twenty years he won his glitt'ring way.
Just then he lost the pilot he had lov'd,
Both as the guide and author of the voyage,
Ah, fond deceit! the guide he was, the author
In distant regions dwelt, of glorious name,
Of softer sex, more lovely and more lov'd,
In virtue as in beauty all unequall'd.

March. Away! away! these swelling tones of praise,
E'en should the object really merit them,
(But much I doubt such wild extravagance)
Would sound like flattery.

Des.

Des. Can no entreaties
Move you?
March. Go—go—you have conspir'd against
My spotless fame, to be despis'd for this,
Supposing you would injure it.
Des. By heavens
Tis monstrous, patience is meanness here,
Language like this would flush the old man's cheek
With boundless rage. Yes, I abjure entreaties,
They have no force between a son and mother.
March. What is this threat?
Des. Madam, when next we meet,
A witness I will bring, whose evidence
You will not contradict, yes, e'en the tomb
Shall utter forth a voice to prove my claims. *Exit.*
March. The tomb shall utter forth a voice? what meant he?
Will the destroyer of my youthful hopes
Wake from the grave to persecute me still?
Oh! I am doom'd to sorrows numberless,
A little while, and this worn frame shall sink
Into the grave—the vital fount is dry;
My pulse beats low—The dead pronounce against me?
Twas but the warm expression of his anger,
To frenzy kindl'd by my cruelty,
Alas! had I endulg'd a softer tone,
Or dar'd but to expostulate, my soul

Had

Had caught the fond infection of my lips,
And thrown me at his feet—that must not be.

Enter JULIA.

My sweetest Julia! come my child, sit by me,
And let us talk of all your golden hopes,
When wedded to the only man deserving
So rich a prize, my dearest girl shall reign,
The cherish'd ruler of his noble life,
Her smiles his best reward, a tear, my love?

Julia. I cannot leave you.

March. But should I leave you!
You are surprised—well, let it pass—when saw you
Your Father?

Julia. Now—he left me on the moment.

March. And said he ought of me?

Julia. He seem'd disturb'd,
But when I urg'd him to reveal the cause
Of his distress, he turn'd away and left me.
I fear, I have displeas'd him.

March. No, no, fear not,
Sing me that song, my love, Lord Edward gave you:
Soft shall it pour its melancholy tones,
Tho' fiction now has lost its power to charm,
Those days are pass'd.

(Julia

(Julia sings, and the curtain slowly falls.)

Whose is yon bier that crowds the ways,
Pale virgins weep around,
And from the black pall turn their gaze,
To dew the kindred ground.
Beauty and youth, alas! lie buried there:
Weep, virgins, weep, tis pity's genuine tear.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment of* LORD EDWARD'S.

LORD EDWARD *alone.*

L. Edw. Astonishment and horror still possess me
And hold divided empire with my Julia.
To find his father thus!

Enter DESMOND.

Desmond! how is it with you?

Des. Wreck'd, wreck'd of every hope on this side heav'n:
Wand'ring alone upon the barren strand
Of life—an outcast wretch.

L. Edw. You've seen your mother?

Des. She tortur'd her indignant mind for forms

Of

Of fell abhorrence and disgust, and left
Her sex's softness, harshly to pronounce,
Expressions full of taunting cruelty.

L. Edw. Was she surpriz'd at your escape from prison?

Des. One feeling only occupied her soul:
The pois'nous rancour of malignant hate.

L. Edw. 'Twas she, 'twas she, that gave you back to freedom.

Des. No, no, believe it not—though for th' offence,
E'en she might deem the punishment sufficient.

L. Edw. But you address'd her angrily, I fear,
And urg'd your claims with too much violence.

Des. Oh no! most scrupulously careful was I,
No accidental word should leave my lips,
That malice might condemn or misinterpret.
No service I entreated her, no favor
Did I solicit, 'twas my wish alone
Most justly to restore the property
She had conferr'd upon the son she hates:
I bow'd submisive to her keen reproach,
I uttered no complaint.

L. Edw. Tis very strange:

Des. Tis more than strange: still there is one resource:
To that I fly—Oh! 'tis most ignominious
Thus to be trampled on:

L. Edw.

L. Edw. Deep from my soul
I pity you, yet tho' your hapless fate
Pervades my mind, chasing each other thought,
I can divise no remedy.

Des. Yes, yes,
Edward there's one—and I'll employ it quickly.

L. Edw. What mean you?

Des. She shall meet Don Ferdinand.

L. Edw. Meet him? Don Ferdinand? the murd'rous wretch,
Aye, worse than murderous, to whom she owes
Twenty long years of sighs, and groans, and tears:
Confront her with Don Ferdinand? the thought
Checks the warm current of my blood, and freezes
Each motion of my frame to stiffen'd horror,
All righteous heaven! blast him, as he moves
His step to meet her—take his forfeit life!
Ye sacred powers! that guard the good and fair,
What had she been, had that man ne'er existed!
I've read of arts like his, and wept to madness
O'er the dread visions of the poet's fancy:
What had I thought the pitiless tragedy
Had e'er been acted on the stage of life!

Des. Forgive me, Edward, 'twas a transient thought,
Conceiv'd in anger: I resign it all,
Yet spare this keen invective on my father.

L. Edw.

L. Edw. Tis I must pray forgiveness from you, Desmond.
And I must trespass on your patience still,
Thro' counsel harsh, tho' as I hope, convincing.
Des. I know your constant friendship, and your zeal
That oft outruns your judgment in my favor,
I have a shrewd conjecture of your meaning:
But let me not anticipate: say on.
L. Edw. What you have seen of this most noble woman,
Must in your mind decide her character,
Her purpose, you observe, if right or wrong,
Twere needless now to argue, is unshaken,
Her's are not feelings of the fleeting moment,
That rise, and rise, but still to pass away,
Not as mere passions sway they, acting e'er
As steady principles.
Des. Most true, alas!
L. Edw. It is the cherish'd object of her life,
Dearer than life itself, to bear unstained,
The name transmited thro' an endless line,
Drawn from a throne, that once o'erlook'd the world.
To force her to resign the darling thought,
Were an attempt of deepest tyranny,
Whose dreadful consequence I dare not name.
And should her son direct the fatal blow?

That

That son, whose youthful path she deck'd with flowers,
Still as she strew'd them, weeping she could grant
No more?

Des. You are a stern adviser, Edward,
But tho' your words probe deeply, I confess
My state required such remedy.

L. Edw. Return
To the mix'd duties of a manly life,
Enjoy the wealth your noble mother gave you,
And mourn with her the tyranny of men;
Pursue the paths your talents point to fame,
And send a name renown'd across the sea,
To tinge her faded cheek with secret pride,
And if my friendship still you deign to prize,
Trust me you have it wholly—never held I
A man so near my heart, as one compleat
In all the virtues of that sacred name.

Des. Oh thou! that gav'st me such a friend to bless me!
Teach me to esteem him as I ought. Edward,
You've rous'd the man that meanly sunk within me:
No! no! she does not hate me—she shall triumph
In her son's fame—and on your yearly visits,
Haply from her a whisper'd wish you'll bring,
That she might own me to the public gaze,
And tell the race my life had not dishonor'd.

Be

Be it so—the time allotted me in Spain
Is almost past—I will but say farewell
To my unhappy father, and prepare
For my departure.

L. Edw. I, in th' interval
Will pay my promis'd visit to my Julia. *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Street.*

Enter LORD EDWARD and DESMOND.

L. Edw. This is my way, farewell. *Exit.*

Des. And mine points here,
He should not leave me—now my spirits ebb,
And in his absence resolution fails.

Enter DON FERDINAND.

My father here?

Ferd. My son, you've wak'd remembrances within me,
That rob yon holy pile of all its charms;
Your form fills up the void of solitude,
And I pursue it as reality,
E'en on my prayers past scenes intrusive break,
And boldly violate the sacred altar.

Des. Oh! enter then this lighter residence,

My valued friend's, its freest use is mine,
That there retir'd we may beguile an hour,
And blend the secrets of our hearts together.

Ferd. But say, will not the noisy world pursue
Our steps, and chase with idle merriment
The solemn thoughts, that suit a state like mine.

Des. Knew you my noble friend, your fears would cease,
Tis tranquil cheerfulness around him reigns,
A foe to boist'rous mirth, and all its vot'ries.

Ferd. Lead on my son—your will is all in all.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment in the house of the* MARQUIS.

The MARCHIONESS and JULIA.

March. Yes! I remember—twas at eve, methinks,
A month is scarcely past, and melancholy
Weigh'd on my mind, and much we talk'd,
Of that illustrious lady of our race,
Wife of great Ferdinand of Aragon.

Julia. When I presum'd to chide your rising sigh,
As woe too cherish'd for a life like this.

March.

March. The noble lady, guiltless of all ill,
Shrunk from the rude suspicions of her lord,
And pin'd away and died—the tale is told,
With the simplicity of ancient time.

Julia. Tis pitiful, and who but must admire
The lady's character?

March. Oh yes, my child,
It shews how precious virtue is to all,
When e'en the bare suspicion of its loss
To noble minds is death.

Julia. Oh, calm, my mother,
This agitation.

March. Julia, I am not well,
You would not think it, but I have not slept
This fortnight—well, well, I shall leave you happy;
I feel I weakly totter on the grave,
And e'en a breath would throw me in—weep not,
Nay—nay—perhaps I err—my fancy sickens
Beneath the burthen of my sinking frame.

Enter Lord Edward.

Oh, my dear lord! ne'er was your presence half
So welcome here—this tender girl will weep
For her poor mother's ills, but you shall check
The falling tear, and sometimes as you sit
Around your English hearth, on winter's eve,
In fond regret, not totally unmix'd

With pleasing recollections, you shall think
Of her that lov'd you both, how well! how fondly.
Alas! I faint, give me your arm a little,
There, I am better now—lead me to the air.
Look up, my Julia, now I'm well, quite well.
The air would do me good, and I remember,
You spoke of paintings you had just received
From England—we've not seen them yet. My Julia
Should learn to judge of English excellence.

L. Edw. I fear the danger of this new fatigue.

Julia. You talk'd of sleepless nights?

March. Of sleepless nights?

Alas! was that the worst! last night, my father,

L. Edw. Oh, why that quivering lip? that starting tear?

March. Just as he liv'd—in form and voice the same—
He stood before me—nor was I slumb'ring then,
But ev'ry object as distinct as now.
In his right hand an ancient scroll he held,
Which, slow unrolling, he display'd at large
The lengthen'd line of our illustrious race:
My name was last, scarce legible to sight:
Averting quick his streaming eyes from me
He bent them on the scroll, and paus'd and shuddered,

And

And fast his tears bedew'd my failing name,
Till all its characters were wash'd away.

L. Edw. To live forever in the hearts of all
Recorded, where destruction cannot reach,
Your daughter's bright example and her glory,
The long transmitted theme of num'rous friends,
Aye in the poor man's orisons remember'd,
The orphan's morning hymn, the widow's sigh.

March. Hush, hush, my lord, the world will hear and laugh,
Oh! lead me to the air, we will return
E'en on the moment—I feel twill do me good:
The distance, well you know, is nothing, nothing.
Give me your arm, my lord, and yours my Julia:
There, I am happy now. *Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*An Apartment of* LORD EDWARD'S.

DON FERDINAND and DESMOND.

Ferd. Never, my son, I will not leave my country.
Yours has no seat secluded from the world,
Where guilt may pine in secret solitude,
Till distant hope shoots forth its faintest rays,
To bless the raptur'd sight: this holy vest

That

That here reminds me of the thorny path
I have to tread laborious, I must leave.
No, no, your land for me is all too garish.
Des. To-morrow then, alone, I shall embark
For England—Oh! how ill was answered here
The purpose of my visit!
Ferd. You have learnt
The danger of the passions uncontrol'd:
How keen remorse pursues the guilty deed,
Tho' law o'erlooks, and cloister'd darkness veils.
Des. But oft the means, that heav'n bestows, employ,
Let frequent letters still convey your thoughts.
I want no trivial news of states and thrones,
Describe each various working of your mind,
Where hope illumes, where dark despair oppresses.
Ferd. This guilty hand, still trembling with its crime,
Shall write no characters that speak of peace.
You bade me smile, and I, presumptuous wretch,
Pursued the syren voice of filial love.
Des. That voice prophetic of almighty mercy.
Ferd. No more—no more—the conscience knows no flatt'ry!
I had a word to say—it is mere justice:
Ere you depart, I must repeat to you,
(Tho' the recital chills me still with horror)
That part of my most guilty history,

Where

Where all that's lovely in creation fell
My sacrifice—I will be more explicit:
Her noble father, dying, had bequeath'd her
To a near female relative, whose wants
Were ill supplied by a too scanty fortune.
My wealth was at this heedless guardian's feet.
She gave me constant access to her house,
Where, all secluded with her beauteous niece,
Day after day I pass'd, till eve stole on
And seem'd to meet the morning: honorable
My vows appear'd, and were as such receiv'd.
Your mother lov'd, but with a purity
That heightened all the charms to me forbidden.
I will not fright you with a wild detail
Of thoughts repented oft, to be resum'd.
One night a slight indisposition shook
Her tender frame, and med'cine was advis'd
Of opiate qualities to lull the pain:
The hour and opportunity conspir'd,
And my fell passions into madness flam'd.
From my hand she received the fatal cup,
So deeply drugg'd, that sleep was all but death.
Tranc'd in my arms the sleeping beauty lay,
Till waking horrors stung her spotless soul.

Des. Alas! alas!

Ferd. My son, I know not what has seiz'd
My burning brain, but midnight darkness
Reigns around me—horrid forms pass by, and tho'
My

My waking sense proclaims the strong delusion,
Still, still, they blast me with their looks of scorn.
There, there's a body writhing in agony,
And the mouth gasps—the cheek is lovely still.
Yonder's a new made grave, and by its side
The king of terrors points, as tho' twere it mine.
And here there comes, as if twere all herself
A little faded, but in grace the same:

Des. Just heaven! what do I see?

Enter the MARCHIONESS, JULIA, and LORD EDWARD.

Ferd. Yet sickness makes
Her step infirm—she walks with difficulty.

(The MARCHIONESS *on seeing* DON FERDINAND *shrieks and falls into the arms of* LORD EDWARD.*)*

Ferd. Oh, tis herself! I've heard that cry before.

L. Edw. Desmond, why, why, have you done this?

Des. Oh twas
Not I—twas the resistless hand of fate,
That still pursues me with its bitterest scourge.

Ferd. Awake, awake, my soul, to this new horror:
This is the chastisement that shall redeem
Eternal

Eternal pains—oh! lovely victim! cold
And lifeless!

Julia. Oh! my dearest mother,
What dreadful shock benumbs each feeling thus?
There is some horrid mystery in this,
Ye guardian angels let it pass away!

March. I saw him, and the dead proclaim against me.
No, no, tis but a vision of my brain.
(Sinks again into the arms of LORD EDWARD, *who supports her to a chair.)*

L. Edw. Don Ferdinand and Desmond, pray you leave us,
Should she conceive your presence but delusive,
All may be well.

Julia. Ye powers of mercy grant!
All may be well!

March. I saw him—he was here
But now.

L. Edw. Saw who?

March. Don Ferdinand himself.
Oh! do not you conspire against my peace.
I heard he was alive—my son it was
That told me—you shall hear him say
How fatally he wrong'd me!

L. Edw. Be composed.

March. I am too weak for contest with you now:

But

But yet, methinks, 'twould soothe me, ere I die,
And stay my sinking spirit to entreat him,

L. Edw. My dearest madam, cast your gaze around,
See your lov'd daughter—Julia, speak to her.

March. I must not thus be treated as a child,
My lord, I am very certain he was here:
And by the sacred pledge of this dear girl,
Whom I have given you—I pray recall him.
(DON FERDINAND *comes forward.)*
I feel obliged—yes, yes, tis he—is it not?
To say the truth my eyes distinguish little:
(To Ferd.) I have a small request to make you, sir,
You see your victim tott'ring on the grave,
Tell these my friends I did not fall in will:

Ferd. Your soul was spotless as that radiant form;
Pure as your sister excellence above:
Each thought refin'd, each action delicate,
Virtue herself was rob'd in charms unknown,
And those who fear'd before, were taught to love her.

March. Deeply I thank you—you will be believ'd
By my dear friends—and for the sland'rous world,
I feel myself escaping from its power!

Julia. My dearest mother, how that world adores you!

Ferd.

Ferd. Oh hear me yet, a moment: you recur
To that dread time, or I had still been silent:
To make you all the reparation left
Within my power—to call you mine for ever,
My wife, my lawful wife, her who was so!
March. Ha! was you married?
Ferd. I was married:
My love for you flam'd out in difficulties,
They rose as high as heaven, I o'erleapt them:
But a fell murderer I could not bring,
To those pure arms—mine, mine, were stain'd with blood.
March. I faint—I faint—and on my bosom falls
A suffocating weight—it will not leave me.
Des. In mercy spare me not—all righteous heav'n!
This second, heavier murder, I committed.
March. Whose voice was that? my son's, I think, was it not?
He is my son—be not surpriz'd, my Julia,
Your mother was not guilty—you heard that.
Julia. Guilty? Oh heavens!
March. Your father seem'd suspicious:
That was not well—but I forgive him quite,
I forgive all—tis dark, tis very dark;
Edward, it was not you that gave this wound:
You did not cause this interview, twas chance.
L. Edw. Me? me? Oh no.

March.

March. No, no, twas fate resistless:
My son, draw near—love and protect your sister,
Receive a blessing from your dying mother.
Kiss me, my Julia—she is yours, my lord,
She is all excellent—I know no fault.
Most fortunate in you: 'tis past, 'tis past.
To him, who gave it, I commend my soul.
Receive it, father, pardon as I pardon. *Dies.*

L. Edw. Julia, my dearest love, she does but faint.
She soon will wake again.

Julia. Never—never—
Wake, wake, my mother, tis your Julia calls,
Your poor despairing Julia—you lov'd her once,
And now you leave her to the desert world,
No guardian hand to shield her from destruction.

Enter the MARQUIS.

L. Edw. No guardian hand, my Julia?

Julia. Oh, you know not
How well she lov'd me! *(Falling on the body)*

Mar. Heavens, do I live?

Ferd. My lord, avert your eyes from that dear ruin,
And fix them sternly here; twas I destroy'd
The fairest, loveliest of the works of heaven.
Where are your tortures? rouse offended justice,
This

This but concludes a ling'ring cruelty,
Drawn out with dying pain thro' twenty years:
This wound was on the mind—another deed
Was done in distant time, yet unaton'd.
Prepare the dungeon, hopeless as my guilt,
Dark as the crimes it ne'er can expiate,
I will not fly a second time:
Des. Not you,
Alone, my father, I partook the crime,
And justly shall I share the punishment.
Mar. Monsters! avaunt! nor blast my aching sight,
You breathe a pois'nous vapour all around,
That veils the splendor of the noon-day sun.
Yes! by that lifeless form, how lovely still!
And such a summons will collect at once
A damning evidence from all the world,
I call down vengeance on these deeds of hell.
Alas! can vengeance give us back the dead?
Can vengeance tinge that lip with its lost ruby?
Ferd. My lord, be quick—summon the awful court,
Place ermin'd justice on its sacred seat,
Collect the world, but not for evidence,
Th' accus'd himself acknowledges the charge.
Don Ferdinand, tho' guilty, cannot lie.
There at the bar I'll justify her fame,

Till

Till the applauding croud, with echoing voice,
Shall glory in her spotless purity,
And ere her soaring spirit gain its heav'n,
Haply the sound shall reach her radiant flight,
And one last earthly tear shall be forgiven.

L. Edw. My lord, suspend your judgment but a moment,
And you shall hear in all their circumstance,
The sad events that mark'd this fatal hour.

Julia. (Rising) Oh! I am sick to death.

L. Edw. Rest, rest, on me:
Time's sweeping wing shall cast its ample shade,
On all these horrors—then, my dearest love,
With milder sorrow shall you oft recount,
Your mother's excellence—and you will pardon,
Should I declare, such minds as yours may err,
Tho' still on virtue's side—tis the excess
Of noble sentiment, most dangerous then
When most alluring, and when most admir'd,
By calm impartial wisdom most condemn'd.
This my unhappy friend you'll call your brother,
He was the chosen partner of my youth,
Ere yet my bosom knew a brighter flame.
He too shall learn each object to pursue,
Tho' virtue's brightest torch illumes the path,
With ardor temper'd by the rules of prudence—
The rest is madness all, and oft converts

The feelings form'd to soothe, adorn, delight,
To desolating storms that sweep away,
Man's highest pleasures and his purest joys.

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